

# ***Dateline DHMH***

Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

## **Pharmacy Discount Initiative Is Launched**

In July, Maryland became the first state in the nation to offer a joint state-federal pharmacy discount plan for Medicare recipients.

This new initiative, called the **Maryland Pharmacy Discount Program (MPDP)**, will help as many as 50,000 low-income Maryland residents on Medicare increase their access to prescription drugs.

Once enrolled, a MPDP participant will be able to take advantage of the State's ability to buy prescription drugs at a 10-15 percent discount. They will pay 65 percent of this already-reduced Medicaid price, plus a \$1 processing fee that is paid to the pharmacist. The State pays the rest.

This benefit adds up to substantial savings — in some cases, the medicine's actual cost may be up to one-half off the retail price.

Eligibility for the program is determined by income. A beneficiary's income must be at or below 175 percent of the federal poverty level (\$15,715 for an individual and \$21,210 for a couple). Available assets (i.e., bank accounts, real estate, etc.) are not considered. And, there are no monthly or annual premiums.

Enrollees are expected to save \$34 million in drug costs per year, or about \$750.00 per person per year. If enrollees have other insurance that includes cost sharing, this program will reduce the co-payment amount.

As with other state health care programs, DHMH will conduct an outreach effort to notify and enroll eligible individuals.

Funding for the program is shared between the federal and State governments, with Maryland receiving 50 percent federal financial support.

For more information about the program or to request an application, please call the Maryland Pharmacy Program at 1-800-226-2142.

## **Bio-terrorism Brochures Are Now Available**

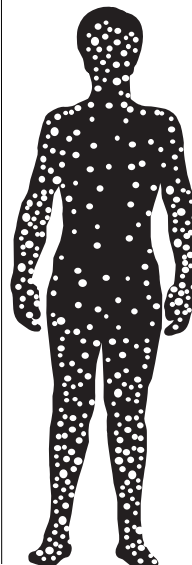
A series of six brochures developed to answer questions about bio-terrorism are now available from the Office of Public Relations.

Developed by Public Relations in collaboration with the Community Health and Family Health Administrations, the brochure topics are Anthrax, Bio-terrorism, Botulism, Plague, Smallpox and Smallpox Vaccinations.

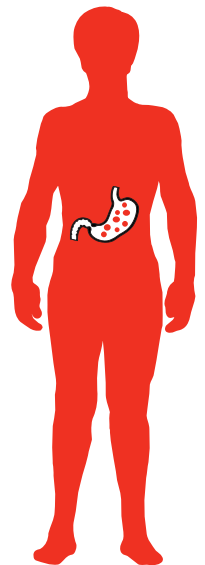
They are being distributed through local health departments, hospitals, health clinics, health maintenance organizations, libraries and community-based organizations.

The brochures are also available in Korean, Russian, Spanish and Vietnamese languages.

They were paid for through a bio-terrorism grant awarded to DHMH by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.



If you would like copies for any community or church group, please contact the Office of Public Relations at 410-767-6490.



## Volunteers are Honored

Springfield Hospital Center honored 150 dedicated volunteers with a luncheon and presentation in June.

Craig Williams, from the Office of the Governor, presented each volunteer with a certificate thanking them for their services.

Volunteers help in many ways at Springfield by working in the canteen or offices, or by helping with activities such as picnics and bingo parties. Volunteerism also provides a great opportunity for interaction between the hospital center and its neighboring community.

For information about volunteering at Springfield, contact Betty Jean Maus at 410-795-2100, extension 3218.



*Springfield CEO Paula Langmead (left) and Fred Hitchcock, DHMH Director of Volunteer Services (right), with Dorothy Manner, one of 150 volunteers honored in June.*

## Calendar of Events

Tuesday and Wednesday, October 7 - 8 — **Blood Drive**, 9:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. O'Connor Building lobby. Call Stephanie Brown at 410-767-6403 for more information or to reserve a time.

Thursday and Friday, October 23 - 24 — **Maryland Rural Summit**, Ocean City. Log onto [www.fha.state.md.us/opcs/](http://www.fha.state.md.us/opcs/) and click on the Rural Health Summit' link for more information.



## Potomac Center Helps Test Nursing Courseware

Potomac Center recently served as a test site for a newly developed interactive Web-based courseware in developmental disabilities nursing.

Funded by the National Institutes of Health's National Institute for Nursing Research, the courseware promotes a caring partnership approach to the delivery of nursing care. Members of the Developmental Disabilities Nurses Association provided resources, authored modules, and served as consultants to HealthSoft, a nurse-owned company that develops interactive computerized education for nurses.

Agencies were solicited to test the courseware by evaluating a one-hour module. A total of 11 Registered Nurses and Licensed Practical Nurses from the Potomac Center volunteered and were selected to participate in this innovative, timely, and exciting project.

The overall opinion of the nurses performing the evaluation was that the courseware would be a useful tool for newly hired nurses or nursing students in acclimating them to the special nursing requirements and needs of a person with developmental disabilities.

As a result of completing the evaluation process, Potomac Center has been granted access to the entire courseware for one year.

*Have a Happy and Healthy Summer!*



## Feeding Babies: Breast Is Best

August is **Breastfeeding Month** in Maryland, the perfect time to take note of the reasons breastfeeding is the healthiest feeding method for infants and their mothers.

While commercially prepared infant formulas can sustain an infant's growth and nutritional status, they cannot supply the distinct health advantages that breastfeeding can.

For example, breast milk is known to contain antibodies that protect babies from infection. These antibodies are constantly being supplied to babies as long as nursing continues. Babies who are breastfed for at least six months have fewer health problems than babies who are artificially fed.



In fact, breastfed babies:

- have three times fewer ear infections;
- have five times fewer urinary tract infections;
- have seven times fewer allergies;
- are six times less likely to develop lymphoma (a type of cancer) in childhood; and
- are half as likely to develop diabetes

The health benefits of breastfeeding extend to the mother as well.

Milk production burns hundreds of calories per day, especially in the first several months before babies get any solid foods. This process, along with the hormonal changes that occur with breastfeeding, helps mothers return to their pre-pregnancy weight sooner than mothers who formula-feed.

Additionally, women who breastfeed lower their risk of breast cancer, and they are less likely to develop osteoporosis later in life.

There are other advantages of breastfeeding, too.

There is no formula to prepare or bottles to clean. Breastmilk is always ready and at the right temperature for feeding.

Nursing is also economical. Powdered infant formula (which is the least expensive type) can cost more than \$130 per month, and the ready-to-feed variety can cost more than \$185 for a month's supply.

Places where you work and shop can be supportive of breastfeeding. Businesses can be flexible, allowing breastfeeding employees time and a private place to use for expressing breast milk during the work day.

Retail businesses can simply make mothers and babies more comfort-

able and accepted when breastfeeding takes place on the premises. Day care providers can work with mothers so that breastfed babies in their care are ready to nurse when their mothers arrive.

And don't forget, legislation passed in the last session of the General Assembly and signed by Governor Ehrlich now makes it clear that nursing moms have the right to breastfeed in public settings or anywhere they have the right to be.

Even if you're not going to be parenting a newborn in the near future, there are things you can do to support breastfeeding in your family and in your community.

Encourage breastfeeding mothers you know to continue nursing. Let friends and family members who are expecting know that you think it's great they plan to breastfeed.

A little kindness and support go a long way in helping to make breastfeeding a successful and enjoyable experience for mothers, babies, and families.

*Editor's Note: Thanks to Amy Kovar Resnik and Tara Snyder from the Family Health Administration for writing this article.*

## New Addresses

Diabetes Prevention and Control Program  
300 West Preston Street, Room 200  
410-767-6774

Cardiovascular Health and Nutrition  
300 West Preston Street, Room 200  
410-767-6778

***Congratulations to . . .  
the following DHMH  
employees who retired in June:***

**Ethel Baylor**, of the Developmental Disabilities Administration's Rosewood Center after 36 years of service.

**Lynada D. Johnson**, of the Office of Health Services after 16 years of service.

**Frances J. Moore**, of the Office of Operations and Eligibility after 43 years of service.

**Lester H. Schamacher**, of the Office of Operations and Eligibility after 31 years of service.

**Kenneth S. Smoot**, of the Office of Operations and Eligibility after 30 years of service.

**Ronald M. Stearns**, of the Office of Operations and Eligibility after 26 years of service.

**Allen F. Muir**, of the Developmental Disabilities Administration after 27 years of service.

**Gale Reed**, of the Family Health Administration after 21 years of service.

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**Get Healthy Maryland!**

The Family Health Administration's Maryland **5 A Day Program** invites Marylanders to "*Get Healthy*" by eating 5 to 9 servings of colorful fruits and vegetables every day.



During **National 5 A Day Month** this September, why not share tips and recipes from 5 A Day with your program participants? While you're at it, you can educate your employees and family with the same information.

If you doubt that eating fruits and vegetables every day really helps you get healthy, results of a just-completed pilot program may convince you. This project provided fruit and vegetable snacks to elementary school students in four states.

As a result, students ate fewer high calorie, high fat vending machine items like doughnuts and candy. Many schools reported that the fruit and vegetable pilot project transformed the school environment and helped students make better food choices.

How can you add fruits and vegetables every day without a lot of fuss?

- Toss fruit into a green salad for extra flavor, variety, color, and crunch.
- Think frozen! Frozen fruits and vegetables are just as healthy as fresh, and they're ready when you need them.
- Add apples, raisins, or pineapple chunks to deli salads like chicken, tuna, or pasta.
- Make a quick smoothie using frozen fruit.

- Keep an easy-to-grab, pre-washed bowl of fruit on the kitchen counter or on your desk.

Colorful 5 A Day materials are available at no cost from the DHMH Cardiovascular Health & Nutrition Materials Distribution Center by calling 410-799-1940. An order form is available on the Internet at [www.strongerbones.org/pdf/OCDP\\_OrderForm.pdf](http://www.strongerbones.org/pdf/OCDP_OrderForm.pdf).

Read a brief report on the school fruit and vegetable pilot project at <http://5aday.com/pdfs/research/78-0503hires.pdf>.

*Editor's Note: Thanks to the staff in the Family Health Administration's Division of Cardiovascular Health and Nutrition for writing this article.*



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